

to correct the problem. If a problem persists, contact the customer service section toll free at 1-877-565-4450, customer@iub.iowa.gov, or 1375 E. Court RM 69, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0069. When contacting the IUB, please be able to provide:

- The name of the utility company.
- A concise description of the problem.
- A list of the actions you have taken.
- Your name, address, and phone number.

Depending upon the particular situation, you may be asked to make your complaint in writing. If so, and the problem is billing related, you should also enclose a copy of the disputed bill. Iowa law requires formal complaints to the IUB to be in writing. This can be very helpful as it provides necessary documentation to begin further investigation of informal complaints.



How the IUB might be able to help you

The IUB is a utility regulatory agency. As such, the IUB enforces certain rules and regulations that utility companies must follow, including many pertaining to customer service issues. The IUB ensures that utility customers are treated fairly under those rules and regulations, which stem from Iowa law. Some common issues that fall under the IUB's jurisdiction are utility billing issues, meter reading issues, payment

agreement requirements, and disconnection and reconnection of utility services. All complaints are handled on a case-by-case basis with individual circumstances considered. Going through the IUB complaint process provides the opportunity for customers to get their concerns extensively reviewed by an impartial third-party, which investigates both the customer and utility side in resolving complaints. The outcome is based on the facts presented and the law.



Some complaints received by the IUB are not under IUB authority or jurisdiction. In such cases, IUB staff still works with customers, and does leg-work on behalf of customers, to provide them the best resources available to resolve their concerns. This may mean providing referral to another agency or organization that can better assist them or information/explanation that can help them and give them a better understanding of their situation.

Iowa Utilities Board

Toll-free: 1-877-565-4450

Local: (515) 725-7321

Email: customer@iub.iowa.gov

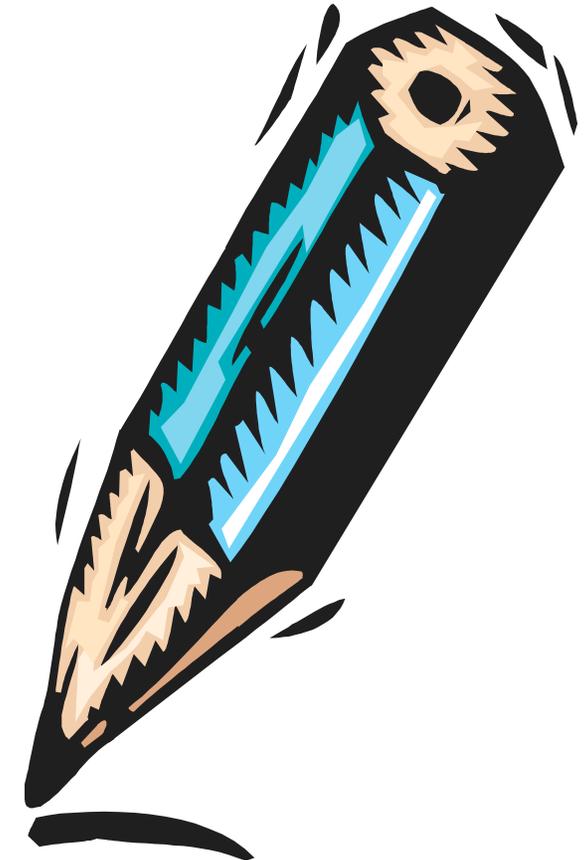
Internet: <http://iub.iowa.gov>

1375 E. Court RM 69
Des Moines, Iowa 50319



Consumer Information Series

Communicating effectively with your utility company



Get to your points by being well informed, cordial, and patient

Communicating effectively with your utility

When contacting your utility to ask questions or communicate a complaint, some simple preparations can often help assure that there are no misunderstandings and make the process go smoothly.



Working first with your utility company is usually the best and fastest way to get the help you need. You should be able to find the telephone number to contact your utility company near the top of the first page of your bill. If you still have questions after you've contacted your utility, staff of the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) may be able to provide additional information or perspective.

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Before calling your utility company

- Have all your questions or concerns written down or fresh in your mind, so you will not forget any important information.
- Have your utility bill near the phone.
- Have a writing utensil and paper handy.
- Be prepared to spend more than a few minutes on the phone and, if possible, call when you will not be rushed.



- Anticipate that you may not reach a live person initially when you call the utility customer service number printed on your bill. You may instead be connected to an automated calling system. Please consider what it is that you need, listen carefully to the prompts, and follow the directions. Write down any difficulties you have using the system and communicate them to a representative of your utility company when you reach them. If you try repeatedly but cannot utilize the system or reach a live person, you may call the IUB at 1-877-565-4450 for assistance in contacting your utility.

Talking to a representative of your utility company

- Note the name of the person with whom you speak and the date and time of the call.
- Politely explain all of your concerns. Speaking calmly and in a matter-of-fact manner will make it easier to get the answers you need or to reach a resolution.
- Take detailed notes of your conversation. It is important to have a record both of what you expressed to the utility, which you may have written down in advance of calling, and what they said to you. This will help you remember the



expectations of the utility and will help you communicate your situation to the IUB or another party, if necessary.

- If you have unresolved questions or concerns, try to express them before ending your conversation with the utility company representative. If you need to gather your thoughts or you think of something later, don't hesitate to call back.
- If a customer service representative cannot resolve your complaint, ask for a supervisor. Call back and ask for a supervisor if necessary.

Common reasons for misunderstandings

- Customer has not read company notices.
- Customer finds bill confusing.
- Person-to-person contact is lacking.
- Customer does not act promptly upon the advice of utilities.
- Customer or utility employee is uncooperative.

You should always first contact the company if you think your utility is treating you unjustly. Then give your utility company reasonable time

